

# First Language Acquisition

Time: Mi 16:15 – 17:45  
Room: SR 601

Instructor: Prof. Holger Diessel  
Office hours: Wed. 14:00-15:00  
Email: [holger.diessel@uni-jena.de](mailto:holger.diessel@uni-jena.de)  
Phone: 03641 944530

Child language is different from adult language. Children might call everything that is round and flat a moon or they might say 'goed' instead of 'went' for the past tense of 'go'. Why do children make these mistakes? And how do they eventually learn the correct forms? This course provides an introduction to some central topics in child language research, focusing on grammatical development. Students will have the opportunity to work with transcripts of computerized child language data and to write an empirical research paper.

## Materials

Can be downloaded from my homepage

## Requirements

Short report, CHILDES exercises, Power Point presentation, Empirical research paper

## Recommended

Lecture: 'Language and Cognition' [Do 16:15-17:45; CZ 3 H6]

## Readings

- Clark, Eve V. 2003. *First Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dabrowska, Ewa. 2000. From formula to schema: The acquisition of the English question. *Cognitive Linguistics* 11: 83-102.
- Diessel, Holger. 2004. *The Acquisition of Complex Sentences*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Diessel, Holger. 2009. On the role of frequency and similarity in the acquisition of subject and non-subject relative clauses. In Talmy Givón and Masayoshi Shibatani (eds.), *Syntactic Complexity*, 251-276. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Diessel, Holger and Michael Tomasello. 2000. The development of relative clauses in spontaneous child speech. *Cognitive Linguistics* 11: 131-151.
- Karmiloff, Kyra and Annette Karmiloff-Smith. 2001. *Pathways to Language. From Fetus to Adolescent*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chap 2-4.
- Markman, Ellen M. 1996. Constraints children place on word meanings. In Paul Bloom (ed.), *Language Acquisition. Core Readings*, 154-173. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- O'Grady, William. 1997. *Syntactic Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tomasello, Michael. 2001. Perceiving intentions and learning words in the second year of life. In Michael Tomasello and Elizabeth Bates (eds.), *Language Development. The Essential Readings*, 111-128.
- Tomasello, Michael. 2003. *Constructing a Language. A Usage-based Theory of Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 113-122.

## Course schedule

- 15.4. Introduction
- 22.4. Observational studies -> Medienzentrum 217  
Introduction to CHILDES
- 29.4. Experimental methods -> Medienzentrum 217  
Karmiloff & Karmiloff-Smith. 2001. chap 2
- 6.5. Prelinguistic development  
Karmiloff & Karmiloff-Smith. 2001. chap 3
- 13.5. Early words  
Clark. 2003. chap 4: 79-92  
Karmiloff & Karmiloff-Smith 2001. chap 4 and 56-66
- 20.5. Principles of word learning  
Karmiloff & Karmiloff-Smith. 2001. chap 4: 68-77  
Markman 1996  
[optional: Tomasello 2001]
- 27.5. Early multi-word constructions  
Tomasello 2003: 113-121  
[Clark 2003: chap 7]
- 3.6 Subject deletion, passives, and questions  
O'Grady 1997: chap 5: 81-85, 98-99; chap 10: 192-208  
Dabrowska 2000
- 10.6. Infinitives and complement clauses  
O'Grady. 1997: chap 6: 107-123  
[optional: Diessel 2004: chap 4 + chap 7]
- 17.6. Relative clauses and adverbial clauses  
Diessel and Tomasello 2000  
[optional: Diessel 2009]
- 24.6. Student presentations
- 1.7. Student presentations
- 8.7. Fällt aus
- 15.7. Student presentations